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AUTHOR Ciampa, Bartholomew J.
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ABSTRACT

This paper is a descriptive study constructed around the questions, What is effective teaching? and How is it prcduced? Previous research findings on the subject are examined from an Aristotelian viewpoint, resulting in the equation of "good teachers" with people who perceive themselves as "good people." The remainder of this paper proposes a design for a program model for teacher education which enables the student to evaluate his own goals, values, assets, and liabilities in both an intellectual and effective mode. Emphasis is given to performance-based education in internship and in-field programs. Charts and a bibliography are included. (JA)

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SENSITIZATION LOCUS MODEL FOR TEACHER EDUCATION:

A PROPOSAL

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by

Bartholomew J. Ciampa, Ph.D.
Director of Teacher Training
Nasson College, Springvale, Maine

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Recent research studies, ostensibly designed to determine the characteristics inherent to effective teachers, seem to be indicating a logical path to be followed in constructing new models for the pre-service/pre-professional teacher training experience.

It seems that when we look at "effective" teachers from the perspective of (1) personal characteristics; (2) teaching and interaction styles; and (3) self and other-concepts; a number of generalizations arise which serve to identify those qualities appearing to contribute to a teacher's effectiveness.

Prior "Effectiveness" Studies (see bibliography)

Don Hamacheck[1] recently synthesized a number of studies which included:

- Hart's study based upon the opinions of 3,725 high school seniors concerning best-liked and least-liked teachers.
- Witty and Bousfield's research dealing with high school and college level student opinion.
- Cogan and Reed's findings dealing with teacher characteristics vis-a-vis student creativity and scientific interest.
- Heil, Powell, and Fiefer's work dealing with the relationship between teacher and pupil personality combinations.
- Spaulding's findings regarding the self-concepts of elementary school children.
- Flander's findings dealing with classroom achievement and attitudes.
- Barr's discoveries relating teaching competencies with "unyielding" daily procedures.
- Stern's review of 34 studies which deal with aspects of non-directive instruction.
- Ryan's findings relating teacher competency with high and low emotional stability.
- Combs' citing of studies which reveal findings regarding the way good teachers see themselves.
- Ryan's reports of several studies which seem to be in agreement when it comes to sorting out the differences between how "good" and "poor" teachers view others.

An Aristotelian View of the Findings

The studies cited above by Hart, Witty, and Cogan seemed to emphasize the importance of the Aristotelian "Efficient Cause." For, teachers who were perceived as the most effective were judged so because of a positive display of warmth, consideration, helpfulness and humor. Thus, it appears that the combined commitment of the totality of the teacher to the institution and student was of great significance in determining his effectiveness. In other words, as Hamacheck states, effective teachers appeared to be those who are "human" in the fullest sense of the word.

Research concerning teaching and interaction styles seemed to reinforce the findings above, and also introduced a new dimension. According to Flanders' research, the more successful teachers were better able to range along a continuum of interaction styles as opposed to those who used a more rigid fashion. This leads one to assume that this type of teacher has a more qualitative and comprehensive understanding of the true goal of education. Consequently if the "first dynamic" (the goal or final cause) is properly viewed by the teacher, and, combined with the "second dynamic" in a positive sense (the interaction of the teacher with his students) operating under the "efficient cause" framework described above, the teacher seems to function effectively.

Research describing self perception (Combs) cites several studies which generally support one's feeling that good teachers perceive themselves to be good people. To take this concept one step further, it appears essential that in order to perceive oneself as a good person, one must understand fully his series of quality-performance complexes and fulfill the demands placed upon him by these explicitly and implicitly defined roles. In other words, role expectations ("material causes") are comprehensively understood and fulfilled by the more effective teacher.

Ryans reported a number of studies dealing with teacher effectiveness related to perceptions of others. His research implies that a positive perception of other components and quality-performance-complexes is a significant factor in teacher effectiveness. Therefore, a positive view of the union or relationship of roles (the "formal cause") seemed to

have a direct bearing upon a positive self-perception which, in combination with the other factors, indicates an effective teacher.

In answering the question "What is an effective teacher?" A number of assessments must be made. When one tries to be too specific in delineating the "characteristics of a good teacher" he runs the risk of having to categorize innumerable qualities. Therefore, it seems more beneficial to generalize in view of the research presented.

The effective teacher should: try to be "himself" or "human" in the truest sense of the word. By so doing, he contributes the positive nature of his totality ("efficient cause") to the institution through his students; he should have a valid understanding of the goals of education ("the final cause") and of the motivating factors operating within his students ("1st dynamic") he should interact qualitatively with his colleagues and his students ("2nd dynamic") toward the goals of the institution; he must understand and fulfill his role (quality-performance complex), ("material cause") fully and take on a positive view of the union and relationship of all roles ("the formal cause") operating within the institution toward achieving the goals of the institution as an end result.

New Model Objective

The task that remains is a deceptively simplistic one. We must, through a reverse funnel perspective, look down through the existing systems of teacher training in order to be able to restructure and re-design a totally new conceptual model which will provide each prospective teacher candidate with an identification of those characteristics of "effectiveness" to which he is positively pre-disposed.

The general objective, then, is to develop a program model for teacher training which non-directively enables the student to evaluate his <u>own</u> goals, values, assets and liabilities in both an intellectual and affective mode.[2]

Process of Program Model Construction

When contemplating a rationale for the conceptual model-construct, three distinct possibilities arise.

Each of these possibilities is "systems" oriented and include; a) a "heuristic" approach; b) a subsystem model approach; and c) an input-output systems approach.[3]

For those knowledgeable with the various systems analysis techniques it would seem that, in the light of previously presented evidence, the input-output model might be the logical choice. This assumption would ostensibly be based upon the perception that since we have determined what our product ought to be all that remains is to modify initial screening procedures and to adjust existing training programs to provide for the desired eventuality. Unfortunately, the complexities encountered as a result of the dynamic nature of our society coupled with our system of educating educators, cannot be accommodated by or structured into this particular systems arrangement.

The major liability of the subsystem model approach appears to rest with the factor that subsystem selection is often based upon common points of view within a given area of expertise. In this regard, our experiences inform us that when we are dealing with a system of education in toto as the universe of discourse, common points of view rarely exist.

On the other hand, a "heuristic" system model includes a set of principles or objectives which should permit the program to achieve specified ends regardless of the changes in conditions under which the program will operate.[4]

Some governing principles inherent to the success of this model which must be considered are in the areas of: 1) the definition of the teachers role in general, and, given specific conditions, in particular. 2) the conditions under which the system can operate in view of possible con-

tingencies (structured flexibility); 3) the functions of teaching in light of the teacher's role definitions; 4) the desired personal characteristics of the teacher.

It should be noted that in any event this program model must be directly concerned with the effects that teachers thus trained will have upon their students.

Philosophical Conceptual Design

We have been shown that it is quite possible to recognize the qualities of a good teacher after he has had a chance to gain professional status. The crux of the issue, however, is to design programs which allow for the recognition of competence potential and effectiveness potential at a point early enough in a teacher candidate's undergraduate academic training to allow for qualitative changes in career goals before the student becomes "locked in" to a teacher education sequence.

Many university students enroll in their respective schools of education as freshmen, and, after a certain period of time, have "invested" too much time to be able to change career pursuits in light of new personal goals without sacrificing their initial time and energy investments.

This line of reasoning (coupled with fluctuating supply and demand statistics) may account for the vast numbers of students who graduate from teacher education programs with no desire to pursue a teaching career.

At this point, the best one can do to approach a solution to such a pervasive problem is to suggest a hypothesis in terms of a teacher training program which will provide somewhat of an "early warning system." In this case, prospective teacher candidates will be able to perceive and assess their own potential (as instruments in the facilitation of student learning) at various stages of a sensitization process without "closing out" other career options.

The problem, then, must be confronted with a two-dimensional proposal: (1) a therapeutic, self-sensitizing approach, coupled with (2) a mechanical change in the structure of teacher training programs.

The analogy of the training of a clinical psychologist might serve to clarify the first dimension of the proposed model. Before the clinician is allowed to formally engage clients in therapy, he is usually subject to having to undergo therapy himself. The rationale for this practice is that he will, most assuredly, be fully aware of his "human-ness"; his faults, fears, guilts and anxieties, before he endeavors to undertake a course of action in dealing with a client's problems. He, thus, has a frame of reference (and first-hand experience) from which to work.

The second dimension of this model calls for a re-structuring of the current practices of training teachers. (See diagram)

It is proposed that the following training sequence be instituted:

1. A three-year, liberal arts, academic preparation period;
2. The utilization of the 2 included summers for qualitative in-field experiences;
3. A fourth year, including the preceding and following summers engaged in a qualitatively evaluated, realistic internship spent <u>away</u> from the "mother" institution;
4. Each student (in groups of no more than ten) to be directed by a cooperating teacher/counselor specialist who is trained in psychological counseling, sensitivity training techniques, educational methods, and supervision.

The goal of this fourth year is the therapeutic advancement of the prospective teacher toward self-sensitization with an end in a <u>valid</u> self-perception of personal goals, values, strengths, and weaknesses, and a subsequent adjustment and positive application of his qualities as a result of viewing himself as truly a "facilitating agent" of learning.

The Next Step

The closer we get to operationalizing a conceptual model the more the "loose ends" need to be tied together.

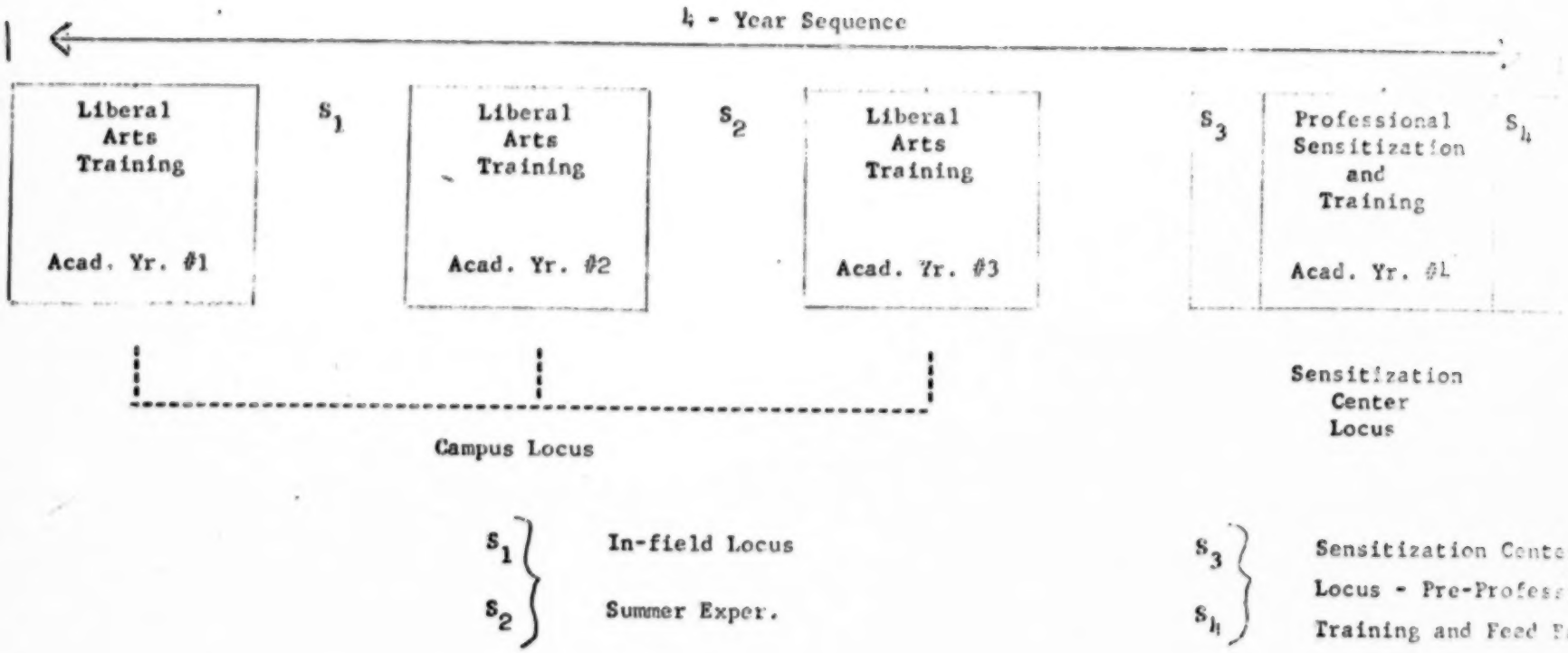
Countless logical questions which must be answered seem to arise. Some are:

1. Will we be dealing with the traditional course/credit rationale or must new alternatives be explored?[5]
2. What kinds of summer experiences will provide the most benefits to our students concerning valid career goals?
3. How will the fourth-year sensitization centers be structured, staffed, funded, etc.?
4. What kinds of new programs will need to be designed to train the cooperating teacher/counselor specialists?[6]

Countless hurdles must be overcome and we must remember that one of them lies in the fact that re-structuring or re-designing any new system creates a vacuum into which a "new broom sweeps clean" mentality can rush.[7]

We must take steps to insure that existing positive factors and elements which may be utilized into this new model are safeguarded, employed, and nurtured.[8] By so doing, a gradual, meaningful, and non-threatening new system of teacher training can be instituted which will provide more "effective" teachers for our children.

SENSITIZATION LOCUS CONCEPTUAL MODEL



NOTES

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8. See: In West Virginia, it is Working, by Kathryn Maddox (ed), American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, March, 1972.

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